

2005-2006 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

U.S. Department of Education

Cover Sheet Type of School: (Check all that apply) Elementary ___ Middle ___ High ___ K-12 ___ Charter

Name of Principal Dr. Ellen E. Mauer
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Romona Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 600 Romona Road
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

Wilmette Illinois 60091-2125
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Cook State School Code Number* 14-016-0390-02

Telephone (847) 256-0211 Fax (847) 251-4153

Website/URL www.wilmette39.org/romona/ E-mail mauere@wilmette39.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date 2-7-06

Name of Superintendent* Dr. Glenn McGee
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name _____ Tel. (847) 256-2450

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date 2-7-06

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mr. Alan Dolinko
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date 2-7-06

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2005-2006 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2000 and has not received the 2003, 2004, or 2005 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: 4 Elementary schools
 1 Middle schools
 1 Junior high schools
 0 High schools
 0 Other

 6 TOTAL
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \$15,107

 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \$14,002

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
- Urban or large central city
 Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 Suburban
 Small city or town in a rural area
 Rural
4. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

 NA If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	48	19	67	7			
K	43	45	88	8			
1	30	38	68	9			
2	45	48	93	10			
3	50	60	110	11			
4	45	52	97	12			
5				Other			
6							
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →							523

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- | | |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| 74 | % White |
| 5 | % Black or African American |
| 3 | % Hispanic or Latino |
| 18 | % Asian/Pacific Islander |
| 0 | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| 100 | % Total |

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 6%

[This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.]

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1	
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 6%
33 Total Number Limited English Proficient
 Number of languages represented: 12
 Specify languages: Bulgarian, Japanese, Chinese, Hindi, Urdu, Russian, Polish, Korean, Thai, Spanish, Romanian, and Gujarti.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 1%
 Total number students who qualify: 9

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{8}{44}$ % Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>1</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>14</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>3</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

Number of Staff

	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>22</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>21</u>	<u>3</u>
Support staff	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>74</u>	<u>12</u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers: 23:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	95%	95%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	98%	97%	98%	98%
Teacher turnover rate	10%	11%	14%	6%	24%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	%	%	%	%	%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Situated in a vibrant community on Chicago's North Shore, Romona School is home to 523 students from preschool through fourth grade. Our student population is 73% White; 18% Asian, 5% multi-racial; 3% Hispanic and 1% African American. Approximately 6% of our students have limited English proficiency. Romona is a very stable environment with only a 6% mobility rate. Class sizes range from 21 to 24. Romona is fortunate to have a staff with a broad range of experience from newly-graduated teachers to veterans with more than thirty years of experience. Fully 60% of our teachers have a Master's Degree or post-graduate degree of some kind and 90% are actively pursuing professional development activities.

Romona School proudly houses the early childhood program for the entire district. We have 68 pre-school students who range in age from three to five. Half of each pre-school class is made up of students who show developmental delays and the other half of each pre-school class is made up of typically-developing students. Children in this program receive regular services such as occupational/physical therapy and speech/language therapy as part of their daily program. Special needs students are welcomed, as Romona provides full inclusion services. In fact, Romona is known throughout New Trier Township as the most diverse school on the North Shore and a leader in inclusion, flexible service delivery and differentiation for students with special needs.

Romona enjoys enormous parental involvement and support. We boast of having 100% of our parents involved in a host of activities. Our PTA funds all field trips and assemblies and takes the lead in organizing our book fair, publishing center, lunchtime clubs, both Disability and Environmental Awareness weeks, Picture Day, School Store, yearbook, and many other unique activities for mothers and sons and dads and daughters. The staff works closely with our parents to ensure a strong school-family partnership. This partnership plays a large part in fostering academic success as well as important values such as integrity, responsibility and tolerance.

Under the umbrella of District 39's vision of "Teaching Tomorrow's Leaders," Romona's mission is to provide a safe, nurturing environment in which students will be motivated in becoming independent life-long learners, while developing a positive self-image and accepting and appreciating the differences of others. We strive to help children live this statement each and every day with high expectations and leading by example. Our yearly school improvement plan (SIP) is congruent with our mission. SIP goals include: 1) To assure all students are appropriately challenged in reading, writing, and math; 2) To drive district-wide implementation of the cultural awareness component of the strategic long range plan; and 3) To maintain and strengthen community perception of Romona School as one of the best schools for students to learn, teachers to teach, and families to flourish.

As we reviewed our mission this year, parents were encouraged to communicate with us what really made the school special. Among the things parents mentioned were:

- Teachers who obviously care so much about the students, and not just in the academic arena, but as people
- Administration and staff who are so very appreciative and responsive
- Mutual respect, support, and cooperation among administration, staff, parents, teachers, and students
- Pleasant, friendly, welcoming atmosphere
- Culture and diversity emphasized throughout the curriculum

To visit Romona is to become a believer in the potential of all children. Prospective parents and community members who tour our school always remark about our students' abilities, presence and respect for one another. Teamwork, partnership around a shared vision and commitment to every individual child are the keys to our success.

PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Romona students have historically achieved at high levels on state and national tests, yet they continue to improve. All students take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) in grades three and four in reading and math. In grade three, over four years' time, the national percentile of our average scale score in reading increased from 77 to 78 and in math from 78 to 82. In grade four, the average national percentile in reading improved from 77 to 78, and in math, from 70 to 76. ITBS reports indicate that the average scale score of our students places us in the 98th or 99th percentile of all school districts across the country. Overall, students have improved even at the high levels at which they are achieving, thus demonstrating our successful commitment to continuous improvement.

In Illinois, all students are required to take a reading and math test in grade three. These rigorous tests, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), measure the extent to which students meet the Illinois Student Learning Standards. ISAT performance is divided into four different categories:

- “Exceeds Standards”-Student work demonstrates advanced knowledge and skills in the subject. Students creatively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems and evaluate the results.
- “Meets Standards”-Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.
- “Below Standards”-Student work demonstrates basic knowledge and skills in a subject. However, because of gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills in limited ways.
- “Academic Warning”-Student work demonstrates limited knowledge and skills in the subject. Because of major gaps in learning, students apply knowledge and skills ineffectively.

Additional information on the Illinois assessment system is found at www.isbe.net.

Romona students have done exceedingly well over the last four years on this test. In math, our students—including those with special needs who have IEPs and 504 plans--went from 95% meeting or exceeding state standards to 99%. Yes, this past year only one student failed to meet standards. Of the students in the “exceeds state standards” category in mathematics, Romona numbers soared from 61% to 73%. In the area of reading, our students went from 89% to 94% meeting and exceeding. The “exceeds” numbers went from 38% to 51% for an overall increase of 13%. When three out of four students exceed state standards in mathematics and more than half exceed in reading, we know our children are receiving an exceptionally high quality of education. These numbers are inclusive of all IEP and 504 Plan students.

Turning to subgroup performance, 100% of our Asian students are meeting or exceeding state math standards. In reading, our Asian subgroup showed strong improvement from 81% to 100% meeting or exceeding, an increase of 19%. Performance of our special education subgroup fluctuates in reading from year to year, but their performance in math has improved from 63% to 90% meeting or exceeding state standards. Romona is proud of the great increases our test scores have shown over the years for the subgroups and for the entire population. Our student performance shows that schools can move from “good to great.”

Our district annually completes a benchmark study comparing our schools to other high achieving schools with similar demographics on the ISATs. When compared to these schools, we consistently find we are ranked either first or second in the category of highest test scores and lowest per pupil expenditure. In sum, we give the greatest “bang for the buck” value to our taxpayers.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Romona begins each year by reviewing both student assessment data and each student’s learning style. During the summer, each teacher meets with the principal to discuss students in her or his new class. The principal presents detailed information on the ISAT, ITBS, and local assessments for each child and together they review the transition notes from the previous year’s teacher. The teacher and principal develop intensive learning plans for children who have not met standards or not made a year’s progress in a year’s time. They then meet quarterly to discuss and revise the plans for each of these students.

Romona administers the ITBS for all students each fall. When results arrive in January, teachers receive inservice on how to interpret and use the results in an appropriate, diagnostic manner. Results are disaggregated and compared longitudinally to assess curriculum and assure all subgroups are making at least a year’s growth in each area.

In May, teachers give local assessments. Each grade level meets and analyzes the data, puts it in a written format, and uses it to plan for the following year as well as to identify certain children for help as they go forward.

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) team sets goals for the upcoming year based on the ITBS, ISAT, and local assessment data. Each goal has specific measures and targets. Every fall at a public meeting, our SIP team presents results from the previous year to the Board of Education and also outlines the goals for the new year.

Such careful scrutiny of data has improved teaching and learning for individuals as well as larger groups. For example, data showed that we needed to pay more attention to gender differences and as a result, we have modified the way we teach reading and writing to engage male students.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

Romona uses a variety of methods and media to communicate student performance regularly. Each fall, our SIP team presents the progress we have made on each of our goals at a televised School Board meeting and at a PTA meeting. We show the five-year longitudinal progress in both scale scores and percentage of students meeting and exceeding state standards. The SIP team also provides updates in January and again in the summer when the ISAT scores arrive. We post the results and updates on the district and school websites and place them in the district quarterly bulletin and monthly school newsletter, the *Romona Reporter*. The principal presents ISAT and ITBS results to the Romona staff in work sessions so they can both understand and use the data. Annually, the Superintendent shares ISAT and ITBS results as well as findings of the benchmark study with the School Board, with all teachers at the Opening Day meeting, and at several presentations to community service clubs. To assure a wide reach, we even devote a special local cable television broadcast to communicating annual test results and longitudinal trends.

Teachers provide parents with individual reports during conference times and report card times. Teachers also review each report card with their individual students. Teachers regularly use communication

methods for parents such as 24-hour access to voicemail and email as well as weekly classroom newsletters. The principal apprises new families of the assessment data during special tours she conducts.

To help parents understand and use ISAT and ITBS data, the district publishes a booklet and also holds two presentations for Romona parents each year. We also conduct similar workshops for teachers. The district website has copies of the booklet and the parent Powerpoint presentation at www.wilmette39.org.

4. Sharing Success:

Romona School regularly shares its successes with neighboring schools as well as with schools throughout the state and country. Within the district, elementary principals meet monthly to share important ideas and successful practices. Our teachers meet with the other district grade level teachers quarterly, and during our district-wide staff development days, many of our teachers conduct workshops or breakout sessions for their colleagues in other schools. Staff have presented in California, South Carolina, and across Illinois regarding differentiation of instruction, use of data, and communication. Our teachers have been nominated for and honored with recognition through the Golden Apple, Illinois Teacher of the Year, and DisneyHands programs. We host a myriad of student teachers and observers because so many prospective educators are eager to be placed in our school. Neighboring schools have also sent teachers to visit us and learn more about our programs, especially elementary foreign language and “Connecting Kids” preschool.

Additionally, the principals belong to the Midwest Principals Center and meet three times each year to share our “greatest hits.” The principal belongs to a county-wide curriculum council that regularly hosts workshops for other educators at which she discusses Romona’s innovative practices which have led to such remarkable improvement. The principal also teaches graduate courses for teachers wishing to get their administrative certificate and is sharing many of the good practices Romona uses first hand. Romona is participating in a collaborative benchmarking project of high performing schools across the country including Ladue, Missouri; Highland Park, Texas; Scarsdale, New York; and Palo Alto, California. The superintendent is an active member of the District Management Council and has presented our “secrets to success” at their annual conference as well as at other national conferences including AASA, NASB, and SSS and several state and regional conferences.

PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

District 39 provides a comprehensive curriculum based on research, rigorous state standards and best practices. Believing “there is no ceiling on any child’s potential,” Romona’s teachers differentiate instruction to challenge every child, stretching those who learn quickly and providing extensive support for those who struggle. Our teachers find a way to reach all boys and girls in the style each child learns best. At Romona we do not let any student fail and instill a love of learning in all.

Mathematics – Daily instruction builds a strong foundation with direct computation instruction and focus on problem solving. Real world problems and manipulatives engage all students in learning number sense and facts; patterns, relations, and algebraic thinking; geometry; measurement; data analysis; mathematical reasoning; and making connections to the sciences and arts.

Language Arts – The daily curriculum encompasses reading, literature, writing, speaking and listening. We use scientifically-based approaches incorporating instruction in phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary along with immersion in quality literature. Through a variety of genres, students learn American literary heritage and also read about diverse cultures, eras, and ideas. They learn literary forms and elements and to appreciate and evaluate literature. The writing curriculum teaches, develops, and assesses students’ skills at every step of the writing process from planning through editing to producing a final draft. We teach spelling, handwriting, and grammar conventions. Within the speaking/listening areas, we teach all students to express themselves clearly and comfortably and to listen actively.

Science – Daily, we use in-depth units combining reading, hands-on experiments and expert demonstrations to teach content and processes of scientific inquiry and experimental design, interactions between science, technology, and society, and unifying concepts of life, physical and earth/space sciences.

Social Studies – Daily, students learn to use reference materials, map and globe skills. They study U.S. regions and world geography to understand political and economic diversity; prepare for living in a changing world; become global citizens who recognize the interrelatedness and interdependence of all living things; and learn to face and seek solutions to present and future problems.

Library, Reference and Technology – Our curriculum covers organization of materials and electronic and traditional research methods. We also teach keyboarding skills and assure a high level of technological literacy. Technology is infused in all areas.

Health – Students study dental health, substance abuse prevention, family life, human growth and development, nutrition, mental health, hygiene, environmental health, disease prevention, consumer health, and household safety.

Physical Education – With daily PE, students have several opportunities for physical fitness development and also learn body control, folk dances, organized games, teamwork and small and gross motor skills.

Art – In addition to acquiring basic skills to produce works of art with a variety of processes and tools, students learn design principles, become familiar with artworks representing historical periods and styles, and recognize art forms important to diverse cultural traditions.

Music – Through vocal music, frequent use of Orff instruments and special performances, students learn melody, music form, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, tempo, and the history and culture of music.

Foreign Language – Spanish is taught in kindergarten through second grade daily (third and fourth grade will be added in 2006-07/2007-08). All classes are conducted completely in Spanish so students become fluent and proficient in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish. They also acquire an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. We use regular classroom content to teach foreign language skills.

Romona has high standards for each child and continually seeks to improve the way instruction is delivered to ensure students are achieving. The different areas of the curriculum are integrated throughout all classes with the effect being a smooth, seamless education for all.

REVISED - March 7, 2006

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

Romona uses a balanced literacy approach based on the Illinois State Standards in reading. In the primary grades, we focus on phonemic awareness and building fluency with instruction and practice in comprehension. The intermediate grades focus on comprehension and specific strategies to use with fiction and non-fiction materials. If a child is still weak in fluency or phonemic awareness, teachers give additional help in those areas. In all grades, teachers use read alouds, independent reading, shared reading, guided reading, modeled/shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing. In guided reading, teachers use flexible grouping practices and individual instruction if necessary. Teachers regularly use reading inventories and curriculum based measures (CBM) to monitor progress of the students in both fluency and comprehension. The principal meets quarterly with teachers regarding the individual progress of students not meeting standards or CBM targets. A full-time reading specialist and paraprofessional work with individual students who are having reading problems and assist classroom teachers in helping students who have occasional struggles.

Romona chose a balanced literacy approach because it is based on research, best practice, and our fundamental belief that all children can learn to read well and deserve the opportunity. When we hire primary teachers, we insist on them having either a reading endorsement or a Master's Degree in reading. We only hire the most highly-qualified staff. Teachers at Romona are expected to differentiate the curriculum for students whether they are reading many years above grade level or below grade level. Teachers are trained to differentiate and regularly do so for all of their students. Extensive classroom libraries and direct vocabulary instruction support our approach to reading. Staff development in this area is ongoing. The proof of our reading success is in the continuous improvement of our students as outlined above.

3. Mathematics, Science, Art, etc.:

The study of mathematics at Romona School has been broken down into 9 key areas:

- number sense and computation
- patterns, relations, and algebraic thinking
- geometry
- measurement
- data and chance
- problem solving
- communication
- reasoning
- mathematical connections.

These key areas are taught in all grade levels. We currently use Trailblazers to assist us in teaching and supplement this series with direct instruction and daily assessment in computation. Trailblazers has a base in problem solving and the main focus is to have students understand and apply basic skills and specific strategies to solving problems, to think mathematically, and to demonstrate application of and rationale for specific problem-solving strategies. When assessment data showed a weakness in the areas of time, money, and computation we incorporated other materials and professional development opportunities to improve teaching and learning in these areas. Our curriculum is based upon recommendations from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum and Evaluation Standards and closely aligns with the Illinois State Standards.

Mathematics instruction relates to the mission of our school in the way that our teachers teach the students. By adjusting their teaching styles to student learning styles, using whole and small group

instruction and supplementing Trailblazers with computation instruction, they help each child enjoy math and become a life-long learner who can apply his or her skills to solving real-world problems. Students can make connections and see meaning in mathematics. The skills the students take with them from year to year gives them a positive self-image. They are confident because they know they are highly capable and possess the skills in math to become successful individuals. We know our methods are successful because 72.5% of our students place in the “exceeds” category of our state test.

4. Instructional Methods:

Romona’s teachers use a vast repertoire of skills to differentiate instruction and improve student learning. We believe, “If kids don’t learn the way we teach, then we must teach the way they learn,” so all teachers are well-trained in methods of differentiated instruction. Teachers use auditory, visual, and kinesthetic modalities in each lesson because they understand that children learn differently and also benefit from the opportunity to strengthen their weaker modalities. Teachers use several diagnostic tools, from DIBELS and the ISEL in primary grades to CBM and SCANTRON continuous progress assessment in the upper grades, to identify where students are performing and then provide appropriate challenge to help each individual learn and grow, regardless of level. Even if a child is already achieving well above grade level, the teacher modifies the curriculum and assignments to extend the individual’s learning. Moreover, in every class at every grade, Romona teachers assess throughout the lesson to determine when re-teaching is needed.

Teachers use a range of groupings including whole class instruction, flexible groupings, one-to-one instruction, centers, cross-grade tutoring, and peer mentoring. Parent volunteers and instructional specialists are used to further individualize instruction. Romona employs a curriculum differentiation support teacher, learning behavior specialists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, a social worker, and a psychologist who provide assistance and coaching for teachers and direct assistance to students.

Teachers’ instruction incorporates all levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. They infuse critical thinking skills in written work and discussion groups. When using questioning techniques, they include analysis, synthesis, and evaluation questions as regularly as knowledge, comprehension, and application questions. Teachers excel at creating project-based activities to foster higher level thought processes.

Differentiating instruction has been the key factor in our continuous improvement and shown us again and again that children have no ceiling on their potential.

5. Professional Development:

At Romona, “life-long learning” is a reality. Our teachers have countless opportunities to pursue professional development. District strands include differentiation, inclusion, and brain research. Teachers sign up for inservice in the strand of their choice to learn about the topic in depth. The principal also guides staff development based upon individual needs in particular classrooms. The principal encourages visitations from room to room by staff to do observations of what is working well.

Grade levels hold monthly collaborations to discuss and plan units of study based upon the curriculum and the Illinois State Standards. At these sessions, the teams also share information about workshops they have attended. The district provides after-school courses of study for teachers in mathematics, reading, technology applications, and differentiation of instruction.

The School Board has allocated significant funds for staff development as it relates to SIP and District 39 goals. Teachers who pursue professional development in these areas receive twice the amount of

reimbursements. Our superintendent runs a book club in which many of our teachers take part and enjoy. This is but one way they keep up with educational trends, ideas, and can have regular discussion with a broad base of other educators.

Beginning teachers are provided with a mentor teacher. They have monthly meetings and will observe each other teaching. The mentees attend monthly meetings with the principal. Building and district administrators use survey data to identify what they can do to further assist and support our new teachers. All of the above have had a great impact on student achievement and have reduced teacher turnover. We have been able to address key areas over the last few years like reading, math, and communication, and have seen some terrific gains on academic measures and parent satisfaction surveys.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Public Schools

Subject: Reading Grade: Third Test: Illinois State Achievement Test
Edition/Publication Year: 2000-2005 Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

Alternative Assessment: Per state guidelines, students with severe disabilities whose IEPs indicate that group standardized testing would not be appropriate, participate in the IAA (Illinois Alternate Assessment) required by the state. Also, students in bilingual programs less than 3 years take the IMAGE test. (Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English)

ISAT	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	March	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	94%	93%	81%	91%	89%
% At Exceeds State Standards	51%	66%	54%	60%	38%
Number of Students Tested	96	85	87	87	88
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	6	4	5	1
Percent of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	0.07%	0.05%	0.05%	0.01%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Asian or Pacific Islander					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	100%	*	94%	100%	81%
% At Exceeds State Standards	50%	*	65%	69%	45%
Number of Students Tested	27	*	16	19	**
2. IEP (Special Education Group)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	60%	50%	*	*	63%
% At Exceeds State Standards	30%	20%	*	*	18%
Number of Students Tested	10	13	7	6	11%
3. White					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	92%	95%	80%	88%	90%
% At Exceeds State Standards	53%	64%	54%	58%	39%
Number of Students Tested	62	69	65	66	**

*Not enough students in that subgroup tested that year to form a valid subgroup.

**This subgroup information was not kept during this year.

Subject: Math Grade: Third
Edition/Publication Year: 2000-2005

Test: Illinois State Achievement Test
Publisher: Illinois State Board of Education

Alternative Assessment: Per state guidelines, students with severe disabilities whose IEPs indicate that group standardized testing would not be appropriate, participate in the IAA (Illinois Alternate Assessment) required by the state. Also, students in bilingual programs less than 3 years take the IMAGE test. (Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English)

ISAT	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	March	April	April	April	April
SCHOOL SCORES					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	99%	99%	95%	98%	95%
% At Exceeds State Standards	73%	67%	62%	68%	61%
Number of Students Tested	96	85	87	87	88
Percent of Total Students Tested	100%	93%	95%	95%	99%
Number of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	6	4	5	1
Percent of Students Alternatively Assessed	0	7%	5%	5%	1%
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Asian or Pacific Islander					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	100%	*	100%	100%	100%
% At Exceeds State Standards	86%	*	71%	62%	82%
Number of Students Tested	27	*	16	19	**
2. IEP (Special Education Group)					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	90%	90%	*	*	63%
% At Exceeds State Standards	50%	10%	38%	38%	36%
Number of Students Tested	10	13	7	6	11
3. White					
% At or Above Meets State Standards	98%	100%	95%	97%	93%
% At Exceeds State Standards	68%	66%	62%	70%	58%
Number of Students Tested	62	69	65	66	**

*Not enough students in that subgroup tested that year to form a valid subgroup.

**This subgroup information was not kept during this year.

Subject: Reading Grade: Third
Edition/Publication Year: Fall of 2000

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Publisher: The Riverside Publishing Co.

Scores are reported here as:

_____NCEs _____Scaled Scores X Percentiles

Alternative Assessments: Per state guidelines, students whose IEPs indicated severe disabilities for whom group testing would not be appropriate were not given the IOWA. Instead, they were given a curriculum based assessment or a nationally normed individually given achievement test such as KTEA or Woodcock Achievement Test.

ITBS-Reading	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	November	November	November	November	November
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	77.8	81.3	75.7	77.1	*
Number of students tested	95	85	82	86	
Percent of total students tested	100%	93%	95%	94%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	6	4	5	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	7%	5%	6%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. IEP (Special education)	65.0	*	56.0	*	
Number of students tested	10	5	10	5	
2. White	80.2	84.2	77.6	78.5	
Number of students tested	63	58	60	64	
3. Asian/Pacific Islander	68.6	68.8	68.9	71.5	
Number of students tested	25	13	19	20	

*Iowa test not given in that year.

Subject: Math Grade: Third
Edition/Publication Year: Fall of 2000

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Publisher: The Riverside Publishing Co.

Scores are reported here as:

____NCEs ____Scaled Scores X Percentiles

Alternative Assessments: Per state guidelines, students whose IEPs indicated severe disabilities for whom group testing would not be appropriate were not given the IOWA. Instead, they were given a curriculum based assessment or a nationally normed individually given achievement test such as KTEA or Woodcock Achievement Test.

ITBS-Math	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	November	November	November	November	November
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	82.2	83.0	80.0	78.5	*
Number of students tested	95	85	82	86	
Percent of total students tested	100%	93%	95%	94%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	6	4	5	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	7%	5%	6%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. IEP (Special education)	78.0	**	**	**	
Number of students tested	10	**	**	**	
2. White	81.0	82.6	81.4	78.8	
Number of students tested	62	58	46	62	
3. Asian/Pacific Islander	85.2	84.4	81.7	78.2	
Number of students tested	25	13	16	19	

*Iowa test not given in that year.

**Not enough students in that subgroup tested that year to form a valid subgroup

Subject: Reading Grade: Fourth
Edition/Publication Year: Fall of 2000

Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Publisher: The Riverside Publishing Co.

Scores are reported here as:

_____NCEs _____Scaled Scores X Percentiles

Alternative Assessments: Per state guidelines, students whose IEPs indicated severe disabilities for whom group testing would not be appropriate were not given the IOWA. Instead, they were given a curriculum based assessment or a nationally normed individually given achievement test such as KTEA or Woodcock Achievement Test.

ITBS-Reading	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	November	November	November	November	November
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	78.1	76.6	82.0	77.2	*
Number of students tested	87	81	91	85	
Percent of total students tested	100%	95%	93%	94%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	4	6	5	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	5%	7%	6%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. IEP (Special education)	47.0	44.5	41.8	48.4	
Number of students tested	12	12	4	9	
2. White	80.8	77.1	84.5	77.2	
Number of students tested	68	55	64	70	
3. Asian/Pacific Islander	68.6	77.3	72.6	76.9	
Number of students tested	13	22	20	11	

*Iowa test not given in that year.

Subject: Math Grade: Fourth Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills
Edition/Publication Year: Fall of 2000 Publisher: The Riverside Publishing Company

Scores are reported here as:

_____NCEs _____Scaled Scores X Percentiles

Alternative Assessments: Per state guidelines, students whose IEPs indicated severe disabilities for whom group testing would not be appropriate were not given the IOWA. Instead, they were given a curriculum based assessment or a nationally normed individually given achievement test such as KTEA or Woodcock Achievement Test.

ITBS-Math	2004-05	2003-04	2002-03	2001-02	2000-01
Testing Month	November	November	November	November	November
SCHOOL SCORES					
Total Score	76.1	76.9	81.4	70.3	*
Number of students tested	87	81	91	85	
Percent of total students tested	100%	95%	93%	94%	
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	4	6	5	
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0%	5%	7%	6%	
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. IEP (Special education)	49.5	51.5	66.5	59.7	
Number of students tested	12	12	4	9	
2. White	76.5	75.2	81.5	71.7	
Number of students tested	68	55	64	70	
3. Asian/Pacific Islander	81.5	82.2	81.4	75.1	
Number of students tested	13	22	20	11	

*Iowa test not given in that year.